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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 PHNOM PENH 001235

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

FOR G/TIP, EAP/MLS and EAP/RSP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM PREL KWMN CB

SUBJECT: CAMBODIA: 2ND QUARTER REPORT ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

REF: A. PHNOM PENH 1144

1B. PHNOM PENH 1153

1C. PHNOM PENH 1178

11. (U) Summary: During the second quarter of 2006, the Cambodian police conducted 17 operations which resulted in the arrest of 26 traffickers and pimps as well as the rescue of 20 trafficking victims. Four foreign nationals, including an American citizen, were arrested for sex crimes against children. NGOs reported four court cases during the period, with conviction ranges from 5 to 10 years imprisonment. Reported abuses of labor migrants to Malaysia have increased, leading to concern for a better monitoring mechanism. End Summary.

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Police Operations  
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12. (U) The Ministry of Interior's Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Department (hereafter referred to as MOI anti-TIP police) reported the arrest of a woman in early April for having trafficked a 22 year old Vietnamese woman to Malaysia for prostitution. The victim agreed to go to Malaysia with the suspect in July 2005, believing she had a job in a caf, but instead she was placed in a brothel. After returning home to Cambodia in March, the victim submitted a complaint against the suspect for luring her into prostitution in Malaysia. Currently, the suspect is in pretrial detention.

13. (U) On April 4, Police of the Phnom Penh Anti-TIP Unit arrested three Vietnamese women, one of whom is the mother of the victim, for selling and buying an 11 month-old baby girl for 70000 riel (USD18). The suspects were sent to court, and the baby was referred to an orphanage.

14. (U) On April 8, in cooperation with NGO Action Pour Les Enfants (APLE), the Phnom Penh Anti-TIP unit arrested a Belgian national for sexually abusing a underage boy. The man confessed to abusing the boy on a number of occasions. He was charged with debauchery and is under detention.

15. (SBU) In late April, the Battambang Anti-Trafficking Unit, in cooperation with NGO International Justice Mission (IJM), conducted a proactive investigation on a beer garden/brothel in Battambang. The investigation led to a raid, resulting in the arrest of the pimp and removal of ten sex workers. Police closed down the establishment. IJM reported that Battambang provincial court charged the suspect with pimping, but later released him on bail. Two of the sex workers were 16 and 17 years old.

16. (U) On May 2, the Phnom Penh Anti-TIP Unit arrested a woman for supplying three underage virgins to an IJM undercover investigator. IJM said they had been following this case since March and concluded that the woman was a trafficker. The victims were returned to their

families. The suspect was charged with human-trafficking.

¶17. (SBU) On May 2, the MOI Anti-TIP Police and Siem Reap Police commissariat, arrested an owner of a Karaoke parlor in the province for pimping seven women. One of the women was trafficked from Phnom Penh, and her parents submitted a complaint. Police referred the women to AFESIP. The brothel was closed for a while but reportedly reopened. (Note: AFESIP reported that six of the seven women have left the shelter. Two of them filed complaints against AFESIP for detaining them against their will and physically abusing them. AFESIP denied the charges, saying it is not in the interest of AFESIP to abuse victims. End Note.)

¶18. (U) The MOI's Anti-TIP police conducted a proactive investigation of a Phnom Penh brothel which led to a raid of the brothel on May 4. This raid resulted in the arrest of a Vietnamese pimp and removal of five Vietnamese sex workers. The suspect was charged with pimping. Another suspected pimp escaped. The women returned to their families.

¶19. (U) On May 9, the Phnom Penh Anti-TIP unit cooperated with AFESIP to raid a Phnom Penh brothel, removing six involuntary sex workers, aged between 23 and 28, and arresting two individuals. Police sent one of the arrested to court to face pimping charges and released the other for lack of evidence. The women returned to their families.

¶10. (SBU) AFESIP reported that on May 10, after receiving a mother's complaint, the police of the Ministry of Interior went to Battambang province to rescue a 14-year-old missing girl. The girl was lured by her peers from Phnom Penh to Battambang province. AFESIP said that the perpetrators intended to traffic the girl to Thailand. Police found the girl in a Battambang club under the influence of drugs. Police arrested three suspects and charged them with trafficking. (Note: The girl in question is the daughter of

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Somaly Mam, AFESIP's President. Somaly complimented the police on their great cooperation to find her daughter. End Note.)

¶11. (U) On the same day, the police of the Sihanoukville Anti-TIP Unit cooperated with APLE to arrest a German national for sexually abusing four underage boys. The boys, aged between 12 and 14, testified that the suspect abused them. He reportedly used monetary benefits to entice the street children. APLE said that they had been investigating the man for five months.

¶12. (SBU) On May 31, the Phnom Penh Anti-TIP Unit arrested two owners of a Phnom Penh caf for providing three underage girls for sexual service. The three victims aged 15 and 16 were taken to WHI shelter. The suspects are under pretrial detention.

¶13. (U) On June 1, the Anti-TIP Phnom Penh Unit raided a foreign-owned pub, and arrested two suspects (French and Vietnamese) and removed four women. The raid was the result of a proactive investigation by the police. Three of the women are under 18 years of age, and were sent to WHI shelter. An adult woman was sent to AFESIP shelter. The suspects have been charged with pimping.

¶14. (U) On June 2, the Koh Kong Police cooperated with the Thai authorities to arrest a Cambodian man for trafficking a Cambodian woman for prostitution. The man is an owner of a Thailand-based brothel along the Cambodia border. The 20 year old victim is from Pursat province and went to Thailand for better economic opportunities. After managing to return home to Cambodia in March, she submitted a complaint to police against the suspect for luring her into prostitution. Police investigated and eventually obtained an arrest warrant from the Koh Kong provincial court. Police are seeking to arrest another accomplice.

¶15. (U) According to AFESIP, another proactive investigation of the Phnom Penh Anti-TIP Unit led to a raid and arrest on June 12 of two individuals and rescue of three women who were sent to AFESIP and WHI. The suspects were charged with pimping.

¶16. (U) On June 17, MOI Anti-TIP Department and the Phnom Penh

Anti-TIP Unit cooperated with IJM to arrest an American citizen for sexually abusing several underage Cambodian-Vietnamese girls (Refs A and B). Four other women have also been arrested for procuring the underage victims. On June 20, the prosecutor of the Phnom Penh Municipal Court charged the five suspects with debauchery, human trafficking, and conspiracy in human trafficking. The suspects are under pretrial detention. The American citizen is expected to be extradited to the U.S. under the PROTECT Act. Four of the five identified victims, aged between 8 and 12, are under WHI's care; the adult fifth victim is at NGO Hagar.

**¶17.** (U) On June 26, the MOI Anti-TIP Department cooperated with the Police of Kampot province to raid a brothel, removing ten sex workers. Two individuals who allegedly ran the establishment were arrested and sent to court. The women, aged 19 to 24, are under AFESIP's care. The raid was initiated by the parents of a Vietnamese victim who submitted a complaint to the Vietnamese authorities, which in turn forwarded it to Cambodian police. The brothel was closed.

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Victims Escaping On Their Own  
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**¶18.** (U) ADHOC reported the trafficking case of a 18 year-old victim from Poipet. The victim was tricked by a Vietnamese couple at her home in Poipet and sent to a brothel in Thailand. She was forced to provide sexual services to no less than ten customers a day. She managed to return to Cambodia with the help of a Cambodian client who visited the brothel.

**¶19.** (U) PJJ reported receiving a trafficking case on May 18, involving a 15-year-old victim, who was lured, drugged, and confined for sexual service in a Kampong Cham guesthouse. The accused is still at large. The victim subsequently returned to her family.

**¶20.** (U) CWCC received another trafficking case on June 16, involving a 13 year-old victim, who was lured and drugged by an unknown man to a brothel-like venue. She eventually made her escape and went to CWCC. Police are investigating.

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Court Cases  
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**¶21.** (U) On April 19, the Kampong Cham provincial court conducted the hearing of an abduction case involving a 15 year old victim. The suspect was arrested in November 2005 while he was attempting to abduct the girl. The court acquitted the suspect because the victim and her parents withdrew their complaint.

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**¶22.** (U) On April 24, the Phnom Penh Municipal court tried an Australian national, who was arrested in December 2005 for debauchery and taking pornographic pictures of children. He was sentenced to ten years imprisonment and ordered to pay civil compensation of 500 USD to each of his six victims.

**¶23.** (U) On June 20, the Phnom Penh Court sentenced two individuals to five years imprisonment for pimping. The Phnom Penh Anti-TIP Unit arrested the convicts in September 2005 for operating a brothel.

**¶24.** (U) On June 21, the Phnom Penh Municipal court opened the trial of a pimping case and sentenced three suspects to five and six years of imprisonment. The suspects were arrested in January for pimping three women aged 24 and 25.

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Other Issues  
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**¶25.** (U) According to CWCC, during the reporting period the NGO has received four complaints from Cambodian women who either are going or have been to Malaysia through the government-licensed labor

exporting companies. The women reported being strictly controlled by the companies during their pre-departure training and were physically abused during their work in Malaysia. They added that the company refused to help them get out of the exploited situation, because they were bound by a working contract. The company told them to pay off the debt incurred for their travel. These cases highlight a need for monitoring a mechanism to ensure the safety and well being of Cambodian workers abroad.

¶26. (SBU) NGOs noted some difficulties in obtaining police cooperation (Reftel C). IJM claimed that police performance was worse during the first six months of the year compared to last year but reported a marked improvement in cooperation towards the end of June. AFESIP reported having submitted nine cases to the Commissioner General of the National Police for action during the reporting period, but only one has resulted in an arrest and rescue. The remainder are either under police investigation or somewhere in the chain of the command structure.

¶27. (SBU) A raid conducted on April 20 in Siem Reap province by the police of the Anti-TIP Department resulted in no arrests or rescues. The infamous Vimean Pkay Prak brothel closed down a day before the police raid. AFESIP told us that during their investigation that they found underage girls being housed in that establishment for sexual purposes. A newspaper article reported that this business was connected with a high-ranking government official. (Note: During Emboffs investigation in the province in March, POLOFF also found out that this establishment offered underage girl for services upon clients' demand. End Note.)

¶28. (SBU) ADHOC reported receiving a victim of trafficking from the Stung Treng Anti-TIP police on May 15. The woman, 22 years-old, originated from Kratie province. She went to Stung Treng in June last year for a USD30 per month job with the help of a facilitator. Later, the owner told the victim that she owed USD250 for the commission for the facilitator and jewelry she brought for her, and that she had to work as a prostitute to pay it off. The victim reluctantly agreed and went to work in a brothel. But after almost a year of prostitution, the owner told her that she had to continue working to pay another USD150 for incrementing interests of the USD250 owed. The pimp would not let the victim leave unless she paid the amount demanded. The victim then called the Anti-TIP police for help. Police rescued her and sent her to ADHOC. However, police did not arrest the pimp or close down the brothel. According to ADHOC, police thought that this was merely a conflict between the two parties.

¶29. (U) The Cambodian Police, at the request of the U.S. FBI, arrested an American Citizen Richard Debski on June 29. Richard Debski has been wanted by the U.S. FBI for sex crimes he committed against children in the US. Cambodian Immigration police said that Cambodia made the arrest to satisfy FBI request made to the Commissioner General of the National Police. Cambodian police have not attempted to investigate Depski for other crimes he may have committed in Cambodia.

¶30. (U) At a two day conference in June in Ho Chi Minh City organized by Cambodia's Ministry of Interior, its Vietnamese counterpart and UNODC, Cambodia and Vietnam agreed to step up cooperation to fight cross-border human trafficking. As part of the implementation of Cambodia-Vietnam MOU signed in October 2005, both countries will create and share a list of suspects and trafficking rings between the two countries. The head of Cambodian delegation, General Un Sokunthea, expressed her commitment to work closely with Vietnam to tighten control over trafficking of Vietnamese women and

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children into and inside Cambodia.

MUSOMELLI